

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 01473 221304Z

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1473

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OVIP EG US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED VISIT TO US BY EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

1. DURING CALL BY EMBOFF ON MARCH 18, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF PEOPLES ASSEMBLY GAMAL OTEIFI REMARKED THAT IN PERIOD OF IMPROVING US/EGYPTIAN RELATIONSHIP IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR SMALL GROUP OF EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS TO VISIT US TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF TALKING WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN US SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. HE ASKED IF IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR OFFICIAL INVITATION TO BE EXTENDED TO PEOPLES ASSEMBLY BY US CONGRESS FOR SUCH A VISIT WHICH COULD, HE HOPED, BE UNDERTAKEN THIS SUMMER BEFORE US CONGRESS RECESSED. OTEIFI SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO BE AMONG THOSE INCLUDED IN GROUP, AND SUGGESTED THE NAMES OF OTHERS, SUCH AS RUSHDI SAID (EX-HEAD OF PA FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE) ZAKARIA LUTFY GOMAA (PRESENT HEAD OF FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE), DR. LAYLA TAKLA AND MUSTAPHA KAMEL MURAD, WHO MIGHT ALSO PARTICIPATE.

2. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW, AN INVITATION FROM EITHER THE SENATE OR HOUSE LEADERSHIP FOR A SELECT PEOPLES ASSEMBLY DELEGATION WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE POSITIVE IMPACT AT THIS TIME. IT WOULD BE SEEN HERE AS ANOTHER STEP IN THE CLOSER US/EGYPTIAN DIALOGUE WHICH HAS DEVELOPED THESE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS AND SHOULD HELP TO BROADEN UNDERSTANDING ON BOTH SIDES. IN THE CONNECTION, THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF THE EXTREMELY
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 01473 221304Z

HEAVY SPATE OF CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS TO EGYPT THESE PAST

FOUR MONTHS. SUCH CODELS HAVE BEEN FORMALLY HOSTED BY PEOPLES ASSEMBLY AND OTEIFI HAS BEEN MUCH INVOLVED. AN INVITATION FOR SUCH A PEOPLES ASSEMBLY DELEGATION WOULD BE A MUCH APPRECIATED RETURN FOR HOSPITALITY RENDERED HERE.

3. OTEIFI DID NOT RAISE THE QUESTION OF FUNDING, THOUGH THIS FACTOR IS UNDOUBTEDLY BEHIND HIS REQUEST FOR "AN OFFICIAL INVITATION" TO VISIT THE US. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER FUNDS EXIST FOR A SPECIAL VISIT OF THIS NATURE OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM, BUT BELIEVE THE SUBJECT MIGHT USEFULLY BE EXPLORED WITH LEADERSHIP OF THE CONGRESS AND SOME OF THE SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN WHO HAVE RECENTLY ENJOYED EGYPTIAN HOSPITALITY. IF A FUNDING ALLOCATION IS AVAILABLE, TRAVEL COSTS COULD PROBABLY BE PAID IN US-OWNED PL-480 FUNDS, BUT SOME KIND OF PER DIEM WOULD PROBABLY BE NECESSARY FOR THE DELEGATION MEMBERS WHILE IN THE US. IF SUCH AN INVITATION IS POSSIBLE, DECISION AS TO COMPOSITION OF DELEGATION SHOULD BE LEFT TO PEOPLES ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP. WE BELIEVE OTEIFI CAN ARRANGE BE AMONG THESE.

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